

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



FRANKLIN SHOWS MARKS NOT EASILY WIPE OUT.

THE FRANKLINS;

OR, THE STORY OF A CONVICT.

CHAPTER X.—THE "TRAVELLER'S REST."

FRANKLIN's reflections, as he walked homewards, were uncommonly depressing. He had been openly insulted; he had quarrelled; he had been mixed up in a disgraceful election row; he had fought. He was not altogether ashamed of himself; for a keen sense of the provocations he had received still rankled in his breast; but, put it in what light he would, he felt himself degraded and disdained—the more that the prime offender had escaped

chastisement, and was probably exulting in the humiliation he had inflicted.

This was not all, however. He saw ruin staring him in the face; or, if not absolute ruin, the necessity for parting with that which he would have said, and perhaps thought, was as dear to him as life itself. At any rate, the idea that his farm must be sold was maddening. And yet he could see no alternative to this course. Mr. Peake had told him some unwelcome truths, had set the matter before him in a fair light, and had virtually refused to assist him, except in his own way. And why? It was evident enough (to William

Franklin) that in spite of his apparent openness and candour, the lawyer was playing an underhand game, as the tool of the young farmer's bitter enemy.

Indulging in these morbid feelings, and encouraging these uncharitable thoughts, the unhappy man walked on, scarcely deigning a reply to the "Good-nights" of the few foot-passengers he encountered in the gloom of evening, and scowling upon the more favoured individuals who, returning from the election on horseback or in carriages, passed him on the road. These were not many, however, for the quiet ones had long before left the scene of confusion, and the more boisterous still remained behind. In a short time, therefore, Franklin had the road to himself.

Midway between the town of H. and Franklin's farm, was a road-side public-house, of no very high repute, save that of drawing good ale. At this hostelry the young farmer had quenched his thirst in the morning, and, foot-sore and tired as he was, it is not to be wondered at that he drew up to this "Traveller's Rest," as the sign over the door purported it to be, on his return at night. At any rate, he did enter, and, throwing himself upon the settle, called for a pint of the beverage for which the house was famous.

It was considerably past nine o'clock, and the tap-room of the public-house had only one remaining customer, who, seated by the fire, with jug and glass on a table at his elbow, and pipe in his mouth, looked up as Franklin entered, and civilly spoke to him by name.

"You are late out to-night," said he.

"I might pay you the same compliment, Barton," retorted our weary traveller.

"No doubt you might; but it is more in my way than in yours to be out late, I reckon," replied the other, who was none other than the Hodge Barton mentioned in a former chapter.

"Is it?" said Franklin, drily.

"Our wives would say so, I suppose. Besides, I am nearer home than you are. Are you footing it?" continued the man.

"Yes," replied Franklin.

"Uncommon short," observed Barton, looking curiously in Franklin's face. "What's the matter, neighbour?"

"Mr. Franklin is put out with this election business, I guess," interposed the landlord, Morris, putting down the pint of fresh-drawn ale. "His side has had a rare good dressing, and that is enough to put any man out of temper."

"He might have known that there never was any chance for the blue and yellow flag," observed Barton.

"I did know that I was on the losing side, and always have been," rejoined Franklin, quietly.

"Yes, the Reds always have had the best of it in these parts," said the landlord.

"Of course they have, and will have, I dare say. The devil's children are sure to get the devil's luck, they say," continued Franklin, bitterly; he was thinking of other things besides and beyond the election, when he said this.

"Well, Reds and Yellows are all the same to me, so long as they drink my ale, and pay for it," rejoined the landlord, laughing.

"They are not to me, though," said Barton; "and if I had known as much a week ago as I do now, I would have voted for the Yellows, out of spite."

"What's up now, then, Mr. Barton?" asked the landlord.

"I have had notice to quit my farm—that's all; and I don't care who knows it," replied the farmer.

"What? Why, I thought you had got a good long lease."

"Long or short, the lease is out next Ladytide; and out I have got to go," said Barton, sullenly.

"What's that for?" asked Morris.

"You had better ask the squire, if you want to know," replied Barton.

"And if you are going to leave your farm, what has that to do with your voting red or yellow?" demanded Franklin.

"He would have voted yellow to spite the squire; I reckon that is what Master Barton means," explained the landlord; "and serve him right, too. I can't see, myself, what business a man has to be making his *tenants* vote his way, just because they are his tenants. And I always have said that the squire carries it with a pretty high hand; he likes to be master: everybody knows that."

"And so you would disown your political principles to be revenged on a man who has injured you, would you?" said Franklin, with a feeling of contempt.

"Principles! I don't care about principles. It makes precious little difference to you and me, Franklin, I guess, which side is uppermost in Parliament. But I tell you I would change my colours in double quick time, to rile a man that has injured me, as you say. Wouldn't you, yourself, now?"

"No," said Franklin.

"What makes you always vote yellow, if it isn't to go against Squire Oakley, I should like to know?" retorted Barton.

"You would not understand if I were to tell you," replied our young farmer.

"Keep it to yourself, then," retorted the other, laughing. "But, any how, I don't think you'll ever be rowing in the same boat with the squire, without you make up your differences first. But perhaps that will come to pass too. And maybe," added he, as the shade of a suspicion entered his muddy brain—"maybe that's why I am warned off my farm, to make room for you, when the squire has bought your eighty acres off your hand."

The blood rose to Franklin's cheeks. For a moment or two, in the course of conversation, he had forgotten the events of the day; but now they rose up fresh in his memory, and he struck the table with such force as to make the ale-glasses ring with the concussion.

"I say, Mr. Barton, ware hawk!" exclaimed the pacific landlord. "Don't chaff the man."

"Chaff! I don't want to chaff," replied Barton; "but I don't understand Master Franklin's queer humour to-night."

"You talk about Miles Oakley buying my eighty acres," said Franklin.

"That's the common talk, anyhow," said the landlord, deprecatingly; "and I can't see that Mr. Barton was any way to blame in repeating it. He was not to be expected to know that the subject was not agreeable; but we can change it."

"The common talk, is it?" continued Franklin. "Well, then, the next time it is the common talk here, be so good as to say that Squire Oakley and I are not on terms to be buying and selling together. Just tell them, too, that you have seen these marks that the cowardly brute has set upon me to-day"—and once more the speaker's arm was bared; and the broad traces of the heavy lash, now almost black with the coagulated blood beneath the bruised skin, were exposed to view; "say that you have seen these marks, and that the only terms on which Miles Oakley and I will ever come together

is, to see how these marks are to be wiped out. And when that meeting happens, in case you should be standing by, I'll just give you a word of advice beforehand; and that is, not to try to come between us." Saying this, the young farmer, who had already risen from the settle, resumed his coat, buttoned it, threw down the money for his ale, shouldered his gun, and soon the "Traveller's Rest" was left behind him.

"What's the meaning of all this, Morris?" said the now solitary guest, as soon as Franklin had disappeared.

The landlord shook his head. "Some election row, I suppose," said he.

"If he comes across the squire while he is in this mad humour, there will be a broken head or two," remarked Barton.

"Pho! you don't suppose the squire would mind *him*."

"I don't know about the squire's minding; but Franklin isn't the man to mind the squire, any how," rejoined the farmer.

We need not repeat any more of this conversation. Presently Barton took his departure, and the "Traveler's Rest" shut itself up for the night.

CHAPTER XI.—HANGING WOOD.

We must now follow William Franklin on his way homewards.

At about a mile from the "Traveller's Rest" the road began to be bordered on both sides by inclosed plantations of firs, beech trees, and young oaks intermingled, and inclosed by a wooden park fence. Beyond these plantations the road made a considerable détour before it again turned in the direction of "The Lees" farm and the village of Oakley. In former times there had been a public pathway through the plantations, and thence into a wood, known by the ominous name of Hanging Wood, from the fact of the body of a man who had some time been missing from his home, having been at last found suspended from a tree in the densest part of the wood. This was a long while ago; but the circumstance had connected both an ill name and a superstitious terror with the spot; and one consequence was an almost entire avoidance of the gloomy footpath by all the neighbourhood around. Taking advantage of this state of feeling, Miles Oakley, to whom both wood and plantations belonged, had incurred no opposition in closing the road altogether, without taking the proper legal steps to attain his purpose. Thus the right of way remained, though the way itself was virtually lost to the public. More than once, it is true, William Franklin, as well as some few others, had asserted his right to pass through Hanging Wood and the squire's plantations, and in sundry squabbles with gamekeepers and others on the subject, had added another item to the causes of deep enmity between himself and Miles Oakley.

In stopping the public road, however, the squire had taken care to keep open a strictly private carriage road through his plantations, to "The Oaks," which road ran parallel, for a considerable distance, with the old footpath, though nearly a quarter of a mile intervened.

And now to return to our young farmer.

Arriving at the part of the plantation on his left hand, where formerly had stood a high step-stile into the grounds, but which had now been superseded by the fence, Franklin for one moment hesitated. He was not wholly uninfluenced by the unpleasant recollection connected with Hanging Wood, and if he had been a little less tired, or the hour had been a trifle earlier, or the night a few shades darker, he might have proceeded quietly along the road. As it was, he gathered up reso-

lution, and, dropping his gun on the other side of the fence, clambered over himself, and was soon pushing his way through the overgrown and disused pathway, with a bright full moon shining above, to direct his steps. Three quarters of an hour more, and he would have been safely at home; but the adventures of that disastrous day were not yet ended.

Any reader of ours who has cultivated a habit of walking through woods and plantations by night, will be aware that the proverbial stillness of that season is liable to be every moment broken by unexpected sounds, which, if not inexplicable, are sufficiently startling. The chirping of grasshoppers, the rustling in the herbage of some disturbed animal, the whispering of the slightest breeze in the foliage overhead, the crackling of a dry rotten stick beneath the feet, the sudden rush across the path of a night-feeding beast, the rising to the wing of a frightened bird, the mournful, harsh, and piercing cry of the shriek-owl, as it wheels around, and which is heard at intervals from every quarter of the heavens, and, if pools of water be near, the croaking of frogs; all this, and much besides, strikes upon the ear and thrills upon the nerves.

Franklin was not impervious to these impressions; but he was no coward, and with the consciousness that with every step he was nearing his home, he strode on through the plantation, and, passing over a narrow strip of open grass land, plunged into the darker recesses of Hanging Wood.

But here, the old foot road seemed completely obliterated. By daylight the passenger might probably have distinguished it; but the moon gave only a dim and uncertain guidance, obstructed as its beams were by the overhanging trees; and in five minutes after entering the wood, he had lost his way. Another ten minutes were spent in struggling through the thick underwood and brambles, which sorely tried his temper, already sufficiently disturbed by the events of the preceding day; and then he suddenly emerged into an open glade which he knew to be on one side of the wood, nearly adjoining to Oakley Park, and at some distance from his right and proper road.

Muttering a suppressed malediction against the wood and its owner, who had stopped the footway, and against the footway itself for having been stopped, the tired wanderer was thinking whether he should endeavour to find his way back again into it, or consummate his trespass by pushing forward into the park itself, when the moon broke out from behind a cloud, and at the same time a hare, which had been startled from its form by his approach, rose from almost beneath Franklin's feet, and scuttled across the open ground. The next moment the gen was at the young farmer's shoulder; and the next, with a report which awakened the echoes of the surrounding woods, the animal lay bleeding and lifeless, some thirty yards from its slayer.

"Fool! why did you get in my way?" said Franklin, pressing forward and picking up the hare.

CHAPTER XII.—GOES SOME WAY TO PROVE THAT WHERE THERE IS A DISPOSITION FOR MISCHIEF, THE OPPORTUNITY IS NOT FAR OFF. We have to turn back to the town of H., and, passing over the chairing of the new Member of Parliament, which was postponed in consequence of the disturbance already noted, and not suffering ourselves to be delayed by the subsequent speech of that gentleman from the balcony of the "Crown and Sceptre," we enter, for a moment or two, the Red and Blue committee-room, which, at nine o'clock, displayed a scene of considerable hilarity.

Surrounding a long table sat a numerous company of the principal supporters of the successful candidate, who

himself occupied the seat of honour in the assembly. The serious, legitimate business of the election had either been concluded, or was deferred to another day, and instead of papers, poll books, and other documents of a like sort, the table was spread with decanters, claret jugs, and glasses.

The company was noisy, but harmonious enough. Elated with the victory obtained, the agents and committee men were congratulating themselves and each other on their success, and some among them were probably contemplating with satisfaction the not distant golden harvest they should reap, as the reward of their patriotic exertions for the good of their country. Perhaps the reflection that he himself was the rich field from which this harvest was to be gathered, now and then forced itself into the mind of the honourable member; but if so, he did not suffer it to appear.

In those "good old days" in which our story is placed, society, or a certain phase of it, may be said to have consisted of three classes, namely, the "one bottle," "two bottle," and "three bottle" men. We may stop here; though, if all things be true which we are told, a fourth might be added to these. It is not much to be wondered at, therefore, that there was a pretty constant run that night upon the wine coolers in the adjoining apartment, a perpetual popping of corks, and that, in short, not a few of the persons then present were slightly inebriated; and also that they were thought not the less of on that account, unless it could have been proved against them that they had succumbed to the enemy too soon.

Among those who were least affected by the wine they had taken, were the squire of Oakley Park, and Mr. Peake, the lawyer. The latter of these two gentlemen had abstained from very frequent or deep potations, from prudential motives; the former probably owed his comparative sobriety, in part at least, to strength of head; though, to do him justice, he had some long-standing prejudices in favour of ebriety, which now and then caused him to put down his glass untasted, when it was half-way to his lips; and the prejudice had been encouraged and fostered by the wife of his choice, who—strange as it may read—liked her husband all the better for his being, as she said, brave enough to resist the temptation to which he was frequently enough exposed. On the present occasion, then, Miles Oakley, although, jubilatious at heart, he had somewhat exceeded his usual stint of a bottle-and-a-half, which he averred every gentleman ought to be able to "carry under his belt" without being the worse for it, was consequently comparatively sober.

There are many comparisons, however, which, though unrecognised by grammarians, nevertheless hold good in common experience. And the squire was in that degree of comparison which caused his countenance to assume a more ruddy hue than was altogether natural to him, and also to infuse into his heart a most genial friendliness (even for him) towards the world, his enemies included. Under these influences, therefore, his heart overflowed with sympathy for the beaten candidate and his party, and even went the length of wishing that both could have been brought in. And being reminded of the boor who "had stood up to him" a few hours before, and had given rise to the disturbance at the hustings, he declared, much to the astonishment of those who heard him, that "William Franklin was a good farmer, and a stout-hearted Englishman; that it should not be his (the squire's) fault if they were not, from that time forth, the best friends in the world; that their previous misunderstandings had been a mistake altogether; and though it would be a lowering of his own dignity to offer

to atone for the indignity he believed he had put upon the young farmer, by the duello, which was sacred to gentlemen, he would do the next best thing, on the very next day, by proffering a full and ample amnesty for the past, and his countenance for all time to come. And if the farmer at 'The Lees' liked to shoot over his manor, why, he should be welcome to do it, in the face of the world." There was nothing to be said after this; the force of philanthropy could go no further.

"You are not going yet, squire?" exclaimed more than one voice, as the great clock at the "Crown and Sceptre" struck ten, and at its warning voice Miles Oakley rose to depart.

Miles Oakley could be firm when he liked, however; and, making a sufficient apology for leaving the company, that he had some distance to ride, and that his Lucy would be sitting up for him, to which he added, "Bless her dear heart!" he hastily made his adieux, and, a few minutes later, the firm trot of his great charger, followed by the gentler canter of his servant's horse, resounded in the now almost empty streets and over the bridge of H. till the sounds were lost in the distance.

"I wonder whether I have been making a fool of myself, or whether I haven't," said Miles Oakley to himself, when the cool air of the autumnal night blew refreshingly upon him as he trotted along the road. And in whichever way this problem was solved, it is not to be doubted that his formal declarations of brotherhood began to give way before the common-sense remembrance of things in the every-day world around him. And he was the more reminded that it was all well, in general, to reserve friendship for true friends, when presently, after passing the "Traveller's Rest," he overtook a solitary pedestrian, whom he had no difficulty in recognising in the broad moonlight as Hodge Barton, his unprincipled tenant; and whom he would have passed without any further notice beyond a civil nod, if he himself had not been recognised also, and addressed.

Only a few words passed between them; but these few words were angry ones on the part of Barton, who had by this time imbibed enough of Mr. Morris's ale to make him quarrelsome and indifferent to consequences; and scornful ones on the part of the squire, who had no notion of being thus bearded on the highway, and by his dependent too. From that moment, therefore, for a time, his benevolence sank down to zero; and emphatically spurring his horse, he hurried onward, followed by his groom, who had heard enough of the conference to be astonished that any man should be saucy enough to address his master "like that."

Passing along the road, overshadowed by the plantations already described, the squire with his follower soon reached the high gate which opened into his private road; and a key from his servant's pocket being applied to the lock, the gate swung back, and the soft green sward of this pleasant avenue yielded beneath the horses' hoofs.

"Nearly eleven o'clock," said Miles Oakley; "but never mind, I shall soon be home now;" and he pressed on more briskly.

We have explained that the private road to "The Oaks" ran for some distance parallel with the old disused foot-path. This it did till Hanging Wood was reached; then the foot-path diverged to the left-hand towards the village of Oakley, while the road slightly trended to the right, and thus skirted the wood without encroaching upon it, until another gate gave admittance into the park proper. It was when about midway betwixt this gate and that slight bend in the road, that the ears of the squire were saluted by the report of a gun, which, in spite of bewildering echoes, his sportsman-like judgment told

him plainly enough arose from the wood on the left. To pull up his horse so suddenly as almost to throw it back on its haunches, and involuntarily stand on his stirrups listening with eager intentness, was the work of a moment. Meanwhile, the servant rode up to his master's side.

"You heard that, Robert?" whispered the squire, hoarsely, though the inquiry was surely needless.

"Yes, Robert had heard it; and he touched his hat.

"What do you suppose it is, Robert?"

Robert humbly opined that it was a gun.

"A gun! you need not talk so loud, Robert: keep quiet, poor nag! A gun! Well, yes; so I suppose, Robert: but—by whom was the gun fired?"

"Border and two lookers were to be about to-night in the plantations, sir; so I heard before we came away this morning; and may be it's them."

"Pho! what can Border be letting off his gun at in the night? Think again, Robert."

"It must be poachers, sir," whispered Robert, a little unnerved.

"Exactly so; now, if we hadn't our horses, it would be an easy thing for you and me to slip into the wood and beat about till we found the rascals."

Robert was devoutly thankful that they had their horses.

"But one of us can do something." He threw himself from his horse, and tossed the bridle to Robert. "Walk the horses home, Robert, and I'll follow. No, that won't do, though, it may alarm your lady. Wait about here, and keep a sharp look-out alongside of the wood, and if anything breaks cover give chase."

"Any man, sir?"

"Yes, man or vermin, as all poachers are. You understand?"

"But your horse, sir?" suggested the quaking servant.

"Tie him up to the hedge, blockhead; and, hark you, I see you are afraid; but if you let the rascal escape I'll never forgive you. And if Dick Border should come along, as it is likely he may, if he was in the plantation when the gun was fired, tell him he'll find me in the wood."

"Yes sir: but—" But the squire was gone.

The groom, who was young, and not particularly heroic, began to quake in spirit when thus left alone on the border of a wood, which, for anything he knew, concealed not one only, but a dozen bloody-minded villains, armed, too, with instruments of slaughter. He stood his ground, however, comforting himself that he had his horse's legs to trust to, as well as his own, in case of the worst; and, that he might be prepared for emergencies, he lost no time in obeying his master's directions, by fastening the bridle of the squire's horse to a stout sapling. Then he reseated himself firmly in his saddle.

How long he waited he could not tell; it seemed to him as though an hour at least had passed away without any fresh alarm, save that which he felt accumulating upon him in his solitary watch, when faintly, as from a distance in the wood, yet distinctly, the sound of voices fell upon his ear, as though in sharp, short, and angry dispute. Then came a lull; then a concussion, as of blows stricken; then another lull; then voices, or rather a voice, raised to a shout; then the report, for the second time, of a gun; then all was still.

Discretion, we are told, is the better part of valour. The discretion of the squire's groom pointed plainly towards the park gate and the stables of "The Oaks," and he was in the act of conjuring up some fair excuse for flight, when a hand was laid upon his horse's bridle,

and the familiar tones of Dick Border fell upon his ear.

"What's up, mate?"

"Is it you, Dick? I am so glad you are come," ejaculated Robert.

"What's up? I say," rejoined the gamekeeper, roughly; "I heard a shot fired when I was laying up in the plantation—"

"Two," interposed Robert.

"I didn't hear more than one, and I cut away down here. And I want to know what's *up*."

"How can I tell you? I have got enough to do to mind the horses," replied the groom.

"Horses!" said Border, looking round, and for the first time noticing the squire's horse under the hedge. "Is the master here, then?"

"He was here just now; but he would go into the wood, and left me here."

"'Tis time I was there too, then," said the gamekeeper; "if he has got beforehand with me in catching a poacher, I shall never hear the last of it;" and the next minute he had disappeared in the wood.

Half an hour passed away, and the groom, a little reassured by the knowledge that Dick Border was not far off, still maintained his post, though with fear and trembling, until, breaking from the covert, the gamekeeper was once more at his side, and so pallid, as seen in the moonlight, that Robert started with affright.

"Ride up to 'The Oaks,' and bring down as many of the men as you can: gallop for life, Robert."

"What—what—what's the—"

"The matter? The squire has been shot, and is bleeding to death, that's all; they'll find him in Pikey's Swamp, and me with him."

GARROTTING AND VIOLENCE IN THE STREETS.

THERE are two things, which though they are not often brought before our notice by those who have to deal with criminals, are yet remarkable in the history of crime. One is, that crime has its ebbs and flows, like the tide, and like the tide must have its generating causes, though these are not always patent to observation, or even discoverable by patient investigation. That the predatory class is sometimes roused into greater activity than at others, is a fact perfectly well known and recognised; but what are the special circumstances which goad them into action at one period, and lull them to comparative quietude at another, no one can pronounce with certainty. Poverty and want have been assigned as the causes by some; but a reference to facts and records often shows us that in districts where the most aggravated penury and deprivation have prevailed through long seasons, crime has been almost unknown. Ignorance, say others, is the parent of crime; but granting that the maxim is well founded, ignorance in a city or a district does not oscillate as crime is often seen to do; men are not wise and humane at one season, and besotted and brutal at another; education rarely retrogrades among any community in our day; while the police records show us that the sum-total of offences against the law is subject to constant variations, which occasionally assume alarming phases. Many other causes are spoken of, and inquirers who look into this subject have broached sundry pet theories, some of which sound well, and look still better in print, but none of which account satisfactorily for the phenomenon under notice.

The other remarkable thing in connection with crime

is, that, like everything else with which human creatures have to do, it has its fashions—which, like fashions in dress, come and go, die out and are revived again, to be again laid on the shelf when their fascinations have worn themselves out. One of the oldest fashions in crime, practised within the memory of the existing generation, was the fashion of robbing on the highway; which was practised very much by ruined gamblers, who "took to the road," as it was termed, to retrieve their fortunes. It is an error to suppose that it was the introduction of railways which stopped the career of the mounted highwayman; the truth is, that phase of robbery had fallen out of fashion long before railways were in existence, and indeed hardly lasted down to the end of the great Napoleonic war. The era of foot-padding, which was contemporaneous with it, lasted much longer, and may be said to have flourished in London streets down to the years 1818-20, when it was put to a gradual death by the gradual light which dawned for the first time on our metropolitan nights. We have a perfect recollection of the aspect of London streets after night-fall in those old days of the oil-blinkers—a species of lamp suspended in a glass pot, and the flame of which was something smaller in size than an average kidney-bean. We were one of a large family, not a member of which ever dreamed of stirring out alone after dark. On the Sunday evenings in winter, the domestic gathering for church was always under convoy of Paterfamilias and the eldest apprentice, who marched in the van with a lantern a-piece, while the rear was brought up by our "big brother" and the youngest apprentice, also carrying lights and stout cudgels. Nor were these precautions needless. The lamps above described made themselves visible, but they did no more, and beyond marking out the line of the streets, were of no earthly use. A foot-pad might take his stand within a dozen feet of one, and be as safe from view as if he were underground. There was no street-police, and the watchmen did not go on duty till ten o'clock. Thus the long evenings were left for the benefit of "the knights of industry," the foot-pads, and a profitable use they made of them. Their favourite haunts were the New Road, the West-end squares, Lincoln's Inn Fields, the Bridge approaches, and the countless narrow avenues that lead into the main arteries of the city. When, in 1814, the allied sovereigns came over here, they brought an immense number of gentry in their train, who found their amusement in fraternizing with the London people, after the manner of continental soldiers everywhere; they rambled the streets, smoking their huge pipes and shaking hands with Everybody, who in his turn was but too happy to shake hands with the brave fellows who had packed off old Boney to the Isle of Elba. But these fraternizing heroes were sometimes sorely puzzled when, happening to stroll too far and too late, they were taken in hand by the prowling footpads, shorn of their pipes and the lining of their pockets, and sometimes sent home bareheaded, the knights of the post taking a fancy to their gorgeous shakoes. The number of our foreign guests who were thus entertained after dark was said to be enormous; but the practice ceased suddenly when a touchy Hessian, objecting to the spoliation, ran his assailant through the body and left him dead on the pavement of Cavendish Square.

Contemporaneous with this race of footpads was another race of audacious and desperate burglars, who never scrupled at murder, and sometimes slaughtered whole families in order that they might plunder their dwellings undisturbed. Their butcheries struck absolute terror, not only through London, but throughout the whole kingdom. Many of our readers must be old

enough to remember the panic which shook the whole heart of society on the perpetration of the horrible "Mars murder," the details of which have been so harrowingly rendered by De Quincey. For months after that affair, thousands of families never retired to rest without hiring a sentinel to guard their slumbers; housekeepers clubbed together and paid armed watchers to patrol their premises from dark to dawn; in many households one of the family sat up while the rest slept; and in the bed-rooms of nearly every dwelling lights were kept burning throughout the night. For the aged and the nervous such precautions were all too few. They barricaded themselves within their rooms, by building new walls of partition, and setting up stout oaken doors, well barred and bolted, on the stairs, the landing-places, and in the halls and passages. We read of people whose sleeping-chambers could only be approached through ten or twelve of such solid doors, who yet did not feel secure, but would set up additional ones on the news of a fresh butchery. The public alarm did not suddenly subside, and the era of its prevalence is marked by a number of inventions for preventing entrance to premises, for escaping from them when attacked, for creating sudden wide-spreading alarms, or for defence in desperate encounters.

One of the most appalling forms of crime that ever disgraced humanity, and which has added a new word to our language, is supposed to have come into existence about the period of the accession of the fourth George. For how many years, however, the practice of committing murder for the sake of selling the murdered corpse, was carried on before it was discovered and brought home to the infamous Burke and his associates, it is impossible now to discover. We have heard the crime coolly attributed to the necessities of demand in the surgical market. That it originated among the "resurrection-men" there can be no doubt; and it is said, with every appearance of probability, the victims of it in the first instances were men found senselessly drunk in the streets, who were picked up and carried off by wretches assuming to be their friends—then smothered and sold to the surgeons. The crime was, however, completely done away by the law which regulates the supply of "subjects" from the deaths taking place in hospitals.

During the agitation which preceded the passing of the Reform Bill, the country was startled by a crime which, though not new—for incendiarism is almost as old as famine—appeared under a somewhat novel aspect. All through the rural districts the corn-ricks suddenly began blazing, and night after night the destructive fires might be seen two or three at a time from any eminent point of view. It was the fierce protest of want and hunger against the high price of bread, which the ignorant laid to the charge of the hoarders of corn. The farmers, however, had the wit to cover themselves by insurance, and suffered small harm, while the incendiaries by this act only aggravated the evils they endured. It was the publication of this fact, rather than the law that hung Captain Swing on the gallows, which at length abated the crime.

About the year 1834-5 street violence in London, and some one or two other large towns, assumed temporarily a most hideous and cowardly aspect, though it was unaccompanied by robbery. Nearly every morning the columns of the "Times" reported the case of some hapless female—now it was a lady, now a person in humble life—who had been stabbed in the body by some lurking assassin, of whom, in no single instance, could the victim give any intelligible account, so instantaneous had been the villain's flight after striking the blow. We

are not aware that a single case was ever brought home to the perpetrators, of whom it was known there must have been several. This crime has since disappeared from the calendar; but there is a characteristic memorial of it, and of the impression it produced, to be found in an edition of Walker's Dictionary, which came out about that time: the word "Monster" stands thus—"MONSTER, *a fiend in human shape, who goes about stabbing women in the dark.*"

Some years later, the suburbs and pleasant walks about the outskirts of London were infested by lurking villains, who chose the fine sunny days for their operations, which they carried on under the guise of mendicancy. We have heard them termed, not unaptly, bludgeon-beggars; for they carried stout club-like sticks under their arms, and, thus equipped, would dart out from some green covert or mossy seclusion, and in a surly stand-and-deliver tone would demand alms. Ladies thus surprised dared not refuse them, and, lacking cash, often in their terror gave jewellery; and even many an elderly gentleman has been known to manifest extraordinary liberality on the sudden apparition of such a ruffian in a shady lane. Luckily for the public, they attracted too much notice by their exploits, and, being warmly recommended to the notice of the rural police, had finally to decamp.

The pitch-plaster era will be in the recollection of most of our readers, not many years having elapsed since that species of gagging was a terror to Londoners. The unsuspecting victim found his nose and mouth suddenly closed with a nauseous adhesive mixture, which at once sickened and smothered him. While tearing with both hands at the vile gag, and struggling desperately for a breath of air, and unable all the while to utter a cry, he was dashed to the ground, his pockets turned inside out, everything of value was taken from him, and when rifled of his property, he was left to recover as he best might. But the pitch-plaster was a rude and bungling contrivance, failing as often as it succeeded, owing to the operator missing his mark in its hurried application. Science offered to scoundrelism a safer and more certain weapon in the newly-discovered chloroform, and scoundrelism accepted the boon. Chloroform robberies grew on a sudden far more numerous than chloroform operations among the faculty. Whatever scruples the surgeons may have had in applying the anaesthetic agent, the discharged gaol-bird had none: he waved his magic handkerchief in the face of his victim, and forthwith had him at his mercy. One might reasonably have anticipated a longer date for this quasi-scientific mode of doing business than it seems to have enjoyed; but the laws of fashion are despotic, and, having had its day, it died out like its predecessors, and was followed, after no great lapse of time, by what constitutes the universal terror and disgust of society at this present time—the brutally pitiless practice of GARROTTING.

Most persons know that the garrote is a method of execution by which capital offenders of a certain class are put to death in Spain, and in the Spanish American colonies. It is a more solemn and imposing form of strangulation than hanging, and it is not likely, as hanging does, to afford amusement to ignorant spectators. The criminal to be garrotted sits with his back to a beam; a species of collar is placed round his neck, and he is strangled almost instantly by the tightening of the collar by means of an apparatus behind the beam. The foul practice of the English garrotters* in some sort

resembles this method, though the street-robbert probably has no intention to kill. London garrotters usually prowl in couples, or in gangs of three or four. One of the villains does the part of the machine by grasping the victim round the neck from behind; if the person seized cries out, he is generally stunned by a blow on the head from a second villain; he is then plundered, and left to recover, or not, as may happen. The frightful frequency of this crime of late—the death of some of the victims, the protracted agonies and the mutilation of others, have at length created such a degree of alarm and indignation as is not likely soon to subside; and society on all sides is assuming a stern aspect, not only against the criminals, but against the peculiar administration of the Government, which hands over the peaceful subject to their tender mercies. The public opinion and sentiment are shown by the precautions which we see and hear of on all sides. A new species of poniard for stabbing a man behind you is publicly sold in the shops. At a public meeting, one class of business-men pledge themselves to slay the garrotter when they shall take him in the act, without delivering him over to the law; and these are countenanced by others, who advertise a like determination in the public prints. What measures our rulers will take in the business is not so clear. At present we are living in a society constituted as society never has been constituted in England since the time of the Tudors, and we are beginning to taste of the experience which may be expected in much larger measure when the full effect of the ticket-of-leave system shall have had time to develope itself, and thieves, burglars, and assassins shall permeate all ranks under legislative sanction. If, however, this system is to go on—if government continues to give liberty to criminals whose offences are unatoned, and does not control their actions when at large—thus showing that it is ashamed or afraid of the effects of its own laws—one of two things must happen: either the desperate class will establish themselves as a lawless power, and levy at their pitiless will a tax upon whom they please; or, honest men will band together to protect themselves, and set up Judge Lynch to do that for them which our Bramwells, with all their good-will and determination, cannot, under existing fallacies of administration, do for them. Both of these alternatives are awful to think of; but even Judge Lynch will be more tolerable than the reign of barbarous violence. Let us hope that the strong arm of authority will be stretched forth to secure the general safety, and that we may be delivered from lawlessness, whether under the form of cruel violence, or of vengeance, however just.

THE OMEN:

AN INCIDENT OF SCOTTISH RURAL LIFE.

THOUGH the days when witches were found in plenty throughout the land, and when fairies were seriously believed in, have now passed away, and are only recalled to memory to afford amusement to the advanced intelligence of the present age, there is still much deep-rooted superstition, at least among the lower classes, which does not seem very likely soon to lose its ground.

And, indeed, how could it be? Enter the farm kitchen on some stormy winter evening, when all the inmates are gathered around the fire. They do not care to read; the country gossip, from being often repeated, has become stale, and they turn with one accord to that never-failing attraction—the supernatural. One after another repeats some strange story, the actors in which are generally relatives of his own, or at least people with whom

* The word Garrote has also found its way into the Dictionary—*"GARROTE, to render insensible by semi-strangulation, and then to rob."*

—Chambers's Dictionary of the English Language.

he was acquainted, and who have in various circumstances experienced something horrible—heard unearthly sounds, seen what are called dead lights—nay, sometimes a veritable ghost—veritable, if you will believe *them*; but it is observable that all these stories come to you second-hand; you never see a person who has himself been favoured with a view of one of these airy beings.

However, this is not thought of by the narrators, who, half afraid of their own tales, sit closely together and still speak on. They speak on, never thinking of the children, who, though trembling with fear, listen as if fascinated, and drink in every word as it is spoken. Impressions received in childhood are generally lasting; and thus it is that superstition still keeps its place in the minds of the people.

One branch of this superstition is a belief in omens, both good and evil. For instance, to hear a cock crow at night forebodes disaster to some member of the household. But, besides such occurrences as these, which are by common consent regarded ominous, any unwonted accident, especially if happening about the time of some noticeable event, such as a birth, a death, or a marriage, is construed into a sure prophecy concerning these events.

The parish of Harthill is, perhaps, as free from such superstition as any that you will find in a country district; but, notwithstanding, it is in it that the scene of our story is laid. The population is almost entirely agricultural; and there is little to be seen wherever you look, but the differently shaded fields, dotted here and there with farm-houses, some well-built and substantial, but others of an older stamp—long and low, with thatched roofs and whitened walls.

In one of these old-fashioned houses, which, however, belonged to a large farm, lived Mr. Robert Partiger. He was an old white-headed man, and withal, rather frail, which, perhaps, was the reason that, instead of building a newer and more commodious dwelling, which he could well have afforded, he preferred to spend the remaining portion of his days in the rooms that had been familiar to him since he was a child. "Jamie," he said, alluding to his only son, "could bigg a brawer house when he was maister, if he dinna like the auld place."

Besides Jamie, Mr. Partiger had but two children—daughters, one decidedly plain, and already aged thirty—judging from which, every one but herself was of opinion that she would remain a spinster; the other, ten years younger, and accounted the belle of the place.

Jean certainly was pretty, and much more ladylike than the generality of girls in her rank of life; but whatever her sister Jessie might assert to the contrary, it was not this that made her the darling of her father and brother, and the favourite of the whole neighbourhood. Poor Jessie, afflicted with that grievous malady, a bad temper, would not allow, perhaps did not see, that it was the behaviour, and not the appearance of her younger sister, that made the chief difference between them. She had one consolation, however, in the fact that their stepmother, who, by the way, had the reputation of being rather "close," found in her a more like-minded assistant than was Jean.

Such was the state of affairs when the gossips began to affirm that Jean Partiger was going to be married—at least, they said a certain white horse, bearing a sturdy young farmer from bordering parish, seemed to have a remarkable partiality for the stable at Newstile, and if that wasn't a sure sign, they didn't know what was.

As is generally the case, they were beforehand with their news, and knew more of what was to happen than those concerned; but, so it chanced, the report

came at last to the ears of Charles Norris, the owner of the white horse. Whether it was that it struck him as a new idea, or whether it only agreed with his previously formed opinions, I cannot tell; but, shortly after being at Newstile, and finding himself alone with Miss Jean, he could not help telling her what he had heard, and asking her if she did not think it would be a very good plan. Of course, he had a large stock of arguments on hand wherewith to follow up the first attack; what they were does not much matter; but they seem to have been strong and convincing; for Jean gave in without too much ado, and it was arranged that Charles should break the news to the heads of the house; while she might, if the prospect seemed encouraging, unfold her tale to Jessie.

To the extreme delight of Mr. Norris, the heads of the house gave their consent almost as willingly as Jean had done. Her father, knowing that in the natural course of events he could not live long, was glad to see his favourite daughter settled comfortably, and independent of all relations, however kind; while her stepmother thought it would be no disadvantage to have one out of the house who seldom took her view of any subject that might be on hand, and had, moreover, such a dangerous influence over the "gude man." Thus both Mr. and Mrs. Partiger, although influenced by very different motives, were equally pleased at the prospect of Jean's marriage.

As for Jessie, her wrath on hearing of it knew no bounds. "A lassie like you to be married!" said she to her sister; "what like a mistress will ye make, I wonder?"

"It's a pity he hadn't the sense to take *yourself*, Jessie," observed Jamie, who would have been as glad to get rid of the one sister as he was sorry to part with the other.

The time for parting came before long; for Charles Norris was impatient to get his wife; and the father did not seek to make him wait.

When the marriage arrangements began to be made, it was very evident, that, to avoid giving offence, they must invite either all their relations, or none, to be present on the occasion. Jessie, of course, voted for "none." Mr. Partiger and Jamie were for "all;" and the mistress, who had been undecided between the wish to save expense and that of exhibiting her new silk, finally cast in her lot with the winning party. Jean was quiescent in the matter; so "all" gained the day, and forthwith invitations were issued to between thirty and forty, two or three being taken to represent each family amongst their relatives.

That number might, it was calculated, be crammed standing into the parlour to witness the ceremony; but as dining in such narrow quarters was out of the question, they would then have to adjourn to the barn—a proceeding by no means uncommon in like circumstances.

As the thing had to be done, Mrs. Partiger was willing to do it handsomely—a fact which rejoiced her husband greatly; for, dinner-making being out of his province, he could not have helped it, even had she determined to be at no pains, and to spare all possible expense.

But one other thing there was, which, notwithstanding the oft-repeated expostulations of his better half, the worthy man had set his heart upon. She had reasoned with him—she had even entreated him; but nothing could turn him from his intention to provide a handsome bridal cake to crown the festivities. It would be wasting money for no end, said Mrs. Partiger; but Mr. Partiger was as anxious for it as ever. It was a fashion



GOOD LUCK TO THE NEWLY-MARRIED COUPLE.

almost unknown in their part of the country—quite ridiculous for a farmer's daughter. But Mr. Partiger was determined that he *would* have it; Jean's wedding should be something "out of the common." So to town he went, and returned with the cake, which he declared to be the "bonniest" that he saw in the whole range of confectioners' shops; indeed, so proud of his choice was the old man, that none but himself was permitted to touch it until it was fairly unpacked and placed on the little table by the parlour window, where its beauties could be seen both from within and without.

Its appearance put Jean into ecstasies of delight; she had never seen anything so pretty, and could not bear to think of its being cut and eaten. Jessie was sure it was unwholesome, and Mrs. Partiger solemnly prophesied that no good would come of it. But before long she almost confessed that it would be an improvement to her nicely laid out table.

Throughout the whole day before that of the great event, the bustle never ceased at Newstile. The "gude-man" rode hither and thither for one thing after another that was wanted, his last job being to procure the certificate of proclamation of banns. All the women were over head and ears in cookery, cleaning, and finally, in looking over their attire for the next day, and last, but not least, the men about the place, superintended by

Jamie, having first removed all superfluous articles from the barn, went with their axes on a foraging expedition, from which they returned laden with branches of every sort of tree which could boast of a pretty leaf or a gay flower. With these they set to work, and soon the rough walls were completely hidden, and instead the space seemed to be inclosed by a high hedge, blooming with all the flowers of the season. A mass of machinery in one corner of it, was hid by a huge bouquet of laburnum, hawthorn, and wild roses, which set up a sort of relief to the squareness of the room. Then a temporary table was erected, extending from end to end, and round it were placed benches, which, for the sake of the ladies' dresses, were covered with plaids and clean sacks.

It was late before all was finished, and then, seated together in the little parlour of what had always been her home, Jean talked with the rest, of the happy days she had spent there, wondering, perhaps, if she would be as happy in her new home. The future did, indeed, look bright, but time alone would unfold what was to be.

Next morning rose as clear and as fair as any one could have desired. Judging from the old superstition, that if the morning was rainy the bride was weeping and sorrowful, and that if it was fine, she was joyous, Jean must have been in very high spirits. She had risen early with the others, wishing to help in what still remained to be done, but this was forbidden; so, seeing the milkers

ready to start for the byre, Jean went with them that she might milk her cow for the last time. It had been named after her, and was a great favourite; but having grown rather old, and not so good as formerly, Mr. Partiger had insisted that another and better one should be given to his daughter on her marriage; but it, of course, had gone to her new abode, bringing up the rear of the carts that contained Jean's "providing."

Perhaps the old cow was feeling aggrieved by this preference shown to another; but whether or not, she was in a very vicious humour that morning—a thing by no means common with her. Jean, however, was too much occupied to give much attention to this, and walked off to the house as soon as she had finished her task. Five minutes after, as all the occupants of the byre were passing the house on their way to the field, one of them attacked Jean's cow with her horns. She dashed at her attacker in return, but, missing her aim, knocked her head through the window, and with one crash, the towering bridal cake fell upon the floor. The poor brute, ignorant of the mischief she had done, stared in at the window for a moment and then walked away; while the boy who was driving them, horrified beyond measure, and afraid that some portion of blame might be laid on him, rushed to the house to tell Jean, who, he judged, would take a more merciful view of the case than would the others. He was right; she did not seek to blame him, but he almost blamed himself when he saw the woful face with which she inspected the crushed remains of the much admired cake.

But Jean's regret was trifling compared with that of her father: he would have got another if there had been time; it was not altogether that Jean's wedding would lose one accessory which he had expected to create much admiration among the guests, but it had struck the old man as an evil omen, that his daughter's cake should be broken to pieces on the very morning of her marriage day, and that, too, by her favourite cow. This was what passed through his mind as he stood gazing on Jean while she picked up the fragments; but he would not tell her what he thought, although, wondering at his evident grief, she repeated again and again that she did not mind losing her cake, and was sure there was no need of one. To Jamie only he whispered, "Oh, laddie, this bodes no good to poor Jean."

Disagreeable thoughts were, however, driven away, whether he would or not, when the hour for the assembling of the party approached.

After the greater part of the company had arrived, either in gigs or on horseback, the carriage of the bridegroom was seen coming rapidly along the road; but before entering the house, he had, in accordance with the etiquette of country marriages, to send his best man to present his compliments to the bride, and inquire if she made him welcome. Of course a favourable answer was returned, and the minister having arrived, the company were carefully packed (under the circumstances anything else was impossible), Mr. Partiger brought in the bride, and the ceremony was commenced. When all was over, and the pair had received the congratulations of those present, they adjourned to the barn for dinner, which was served immediately. It was evident that Mrs. Partiger had done her best, for the table was perfectly laden with the variety of eatables that she had provided; indeed, to get them all cooked she had been obliged to kindle a fire outside the house, her kitchen accommodation being far too limited.

By the time dinner was ended, several "sweetie wives" had made their appearance, and were seen comfortably squatted beside the door. These of course were liberally

patronized by the gentlemen, who distributed their purchases amongst the ladies, and when tea was announced shortly after, every one appeared with a most bountiful supply.

Finally, the bride and bridegroom drove off, followed by the whole party, and pelted with a vigorous shower of old shoes, to "bring them good luck." So said Mrs. Partiger, so said Jessie; and the "gudeman" only, regardless of the success with which the whole affair had proceeded, brooded gloomily over the morning's catastrophe. "The puir lassie!" said he to his wife. "I can get nae peace with thinking aboot her." But Mrs. Partiger only laughed, and wondered what "possessed" him to take such fancies into his head.

Perhaps she was right in not wishing to encourage her husband's forebodings; but it was evident that her system of discouragement had little effect, for it was weeks before Mr. Partiger ceased to trouble about the omen, which he believed had been sent to prepare them for some evil about to happen to Jean.

If it was to be so, there was little appearance of it, for the first few months of Jean's married life were as happy as possible; but her bright face perfectly reassured her father, who had almost forgotten his alarm, and was once more happy in the belief that a long and prosperous life lay before his darling.

Meantime the year sped on, and once again it was summer, and wanted but a fortnight to the anniversary of Jean's wedding day. This our friend Mr. Partiger discovered one day, while engaged in trimming the garden, a task which in former times had belonged to his absent daughter; and as all the events of that memorable day came back on his recollection, there came on him also, a little of that anxious fear which the unfortunate omen of the broken cake had first created. However, shaking it off, when his better half appeared to call him to dinner he accompanied her to the house, and proposed to the assembled family that they should get Jean and her husband to spend the approaching anniversary with them. To this every one agreed; so Mr. Partiger started for Mr. Norris's farm, to give the invitation, anticipating as he rode along, how Jean would run out to meet him when she saw him coming, and how delighted she would be to accede to his request.

Thus pleasantly occupied, he was at his destination almost before he was aware of it, and was led into the parlour by Jean, whose pleasure at seeing him was by no means less than he had expected, and who, as usual, overwhelmed him with questions as to the proceedings at Newstile, which she still persisted in calling "home," notwithstanding her husband's laughing hints to the effect that she had now no right to style it so. Then the visit to this home which she was still so fond of was proposed, and as nothing stood in the way, it was settled that Mr. Norris should drive Jean down early in the forenoon, so that she might have as long time as possible with her sister and father. Everything arranged, the two farmers began to talk of the weather and the crops, which they affirmed were first-rate, on account of the uncommonly fine weather.

"It's been a healthy summer, too," observed Mr. Partiger; "I've scarcely heard of a case of fever or any other bad complaint."

"Oh, Charles," exclaimed Jean, "that puts me in mind that one of the servant men was obliged to go off to the doctor. He had been sick all day, and his throat had got very sore. I looked into it, and really I don't know what's the matter. It looked queer; but then I don't know much about these things."

"Not much the matter with him, Jeannie," said Charles,

"unless it be the want of a holiday," and the conversation forthwith took a new turn.

Very gaily did the evening pass on, and when Mr. Partiger said good-bye to Jean, he thought he had never seen her looking gayer or happier.

Poor old father! Two days after there came a messenger to tell him, if he wished to see Jean alive, he must come to Nubblibank as quickly as his horse would carry him.

Scarcely able to comprehend the sad tidings, he went, but it was too late, and Mr. Partiger never saw his living daughter again.

Jean was the first victim in the district to that fearful disease diphtheria, although the servant from whom, while examining his throat, she had caught the infection, did not survive her more than a few hours. Would that they had been the last! but when, on the anniversary of her marriage day, the same company who had seen Jean wedded, gathered together for her burial, more than one was sore at heart for the dear ones, who, though not gone from them, were suffering from the same disease which had proved fatal to her. And who knew what the issue might be?

Not many months after, Mr. Partiger, too, died, not so much from any settled disease, as from old age and weakness; but while he lived, no reasoning could convince him that the wedding cake catastrophe was not a certain intimation of what afterwards happened.

The coincidence was, perhaps, remarkable; but superstition is always sure to twist events so as to suit itself. Had nothing untoward occurred, the throwing of the old shoes might have been often cited as an omen of prosperity.

This unfortunate event of the broken wedding cake continues to be told all over the country side, and the superstition about omens has got a new lease of possession in ignorant people's minds. As the minister of the parish, I can only combat it by dwelling on the fact, that all things happen by the wise and good arrangement of God, who has hidden the future from men, and by whose permission what we call mishaps and calamities occur. Those who live in this persuasion will not be troubled by foolish omens, but under every circumstance will be enabled to say, "He doeth all things well."

MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND.—Ps. xxxi. 15.

SOVEREIGN Ruler of the skies!
Ever gracious, ever wise!
All my times are in Thy hand,
All events at Thy command.

He that formed me in the womb,
He shall guide me to the tomb;
All my times shall ever be
Ordered by His wise decree.

Times of sickness, times of health;
Times of poverty and wealth;
Times of trial and of grief,
Times of triumph and relief;

Times the temptor's power to prove;
Times to taste a Saviour's love;
All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend.

Plagues and deaths around me fly;
Till He bids I cannot die;
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of Love sees fit.

EPPING FOREST IN DANGER.

THE note of alarm has been sounded again and again in the newspapers, concerning the danger that threatens

the favourite haunt of the population of East London. The peril that hangs over Epping Forest is not that of fire, of flood, or of brigandage, but of dissolution, gradual, it may be, but yet rapid and fatal—dissolution by absorption and a hocus-pocus of tape, parchment, and cruel ink shed, which is intended to transform the common pleasure-ground of over a million toiling Londoners into private lawns, gardens, shrubberies, and snug villas for the super-respectable classes. What wonder if those who are interested in the health and well-being of the hard-working ranks put in a *caveat* against this proceeding, and lift up their voices in warning? Most of our metropolitan readers know well enough what Epping Forest is to the East of London. Thousands of them have witnessed, and probably taken part in, the multitudinous migrations—on foot, by omnibus, by crowded van, or by rail—which sets in forest-ward so soon as the sun has licked up the showers of April, and which continues all the summer through, until the autumnal winds scatter the brown leaves and pile them ankle-deep in the winding paths. They have seen the picturesque recesses of the greenwood thronged with holiday-makers, while the secluded dells and tangled thickets were vocal with the sounds of innocent mirth and infantile revelry. They have met in the far-stretching foot-tracks, or surprised in some umbrageous dingle, the Paterfamilias of humble life, surrounded by his group of little ones, and enjoying in this retreat pleasures which richer men seek at the fashionable watering-place, or in a continental ramble. They know that to him who toils for bread from one year's end to another, change of air and change of scene are as necessary, and quite as delightful, as they are to the nobleman or the millionaire; and like us, they would preserve to the toiler and his family the privileges to which prescription and long use have given him a right.

If any one doubts the value of the freedom of Epping Forest to the classes who habitually make the most constant use of it, we would recommend him to dedicate just one day to a quiet perambulation of Spitalfields, Whitechapel, and Bethnal Green, and their immediate purlieus. He will see that, as a rule, the face of nature is blotted out of these far-spreading districts, and that, if there be anything to remind the denizens of such facts as that birds sing, and flowers blow—that grass waves in the wind, and trees put forth green leaves—such reminders have been nursed by them *within* their crowded dwellings, and are not to be met with in their walks *without*. It will be a hard measure that deprives a toiling population so situated, of the chief available breathing-ground for them, and one, moreover, which has been their home from time immemorial.

In the meanwhile, the mischief and the wrong is being done. The available area of the forest is rapidly diminishing month by month, and it is a fact that within the last few years thousands of acres have been cleared of their timber and inclosed. We should have no right to complain of this, if what has been done involved no injustice, and could be shown to be in strict accordance with the laws of property; but in point of fact, as has been shown again and again in the public prints, "all these inclosures are illegal under the provisions of the General Inclosure Act, which enacts that no land, within fifteen miles of London, over which there are any rights of common, shall be inclosed without the authority of Parliament, and that proof of sixty years' usage of any such right shall be sufficient evidence of its existence." Now, it is indisputable that rights of common, and other public rights, have been exercised in this forest from time

immemorial, and that those parts of the forest where inclosures have taken place, lie within the prescribed distance. Yet, notwithstanding this, the sanction of Parliament for such inclosures has not been obtained. The lords of the manors, indeed, who let on lease or sell the land, allege in their justification that they have purchased whatever rights existed over the forest; this, however, is not true, and it is proved by a Return recently printed by order of the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Peacocke, M.P., that all which the lords of the manors have purchased is the right, formerly possessed by the crown, of keeping deer in the forest.

What measures should be taken on the part of the people, or their well-wishers, to put a stop to this species of lordly land-poaching, we can hardly take upon us to recommend. Something more than a half-century ago, a certain royal personage wanted to shut the people out of Bushy Park, and did actually, for a time, fence them out. But there was an old cobbler, living in Kingston, close by, who had saved a few hundred pounds during a life of labour, and who felt his indignation raised at the overbearing tyranny of the strong hand. He went to law with the royal encroacher, and succeeded in substantiating the people's right; the fences had to be thrown down, and from that time forward the Park was free to everybody. Thus the cobbler's few pounds purchased the means of health and pleasure for millions. Perhaps a patriotic philanthropist of the same stamp, if such a one were forthcoming, might fight the battle of Epping Forest just as successfully, and achieve a victory at the cost of a few thousands. In the absence of such a benefactor, however, the next thing might be an appeal to Parliament by a numerously-signed petition in the coming session.

In the interim we shall venture upon a word of warning to all intending squatters upon the people's estate. Some of them probably may not be aware that the Inclosure Act provides that all land inclosed without the requisite authority shall at any time within twenty years from its inclosure, be subject to allotment under the Act, in the same manner as if it had never been inclosed at all. Here is sufficient reason, we should think, for preventing any one from investing money in the forest lands, either by clearing or building upon them, however tempting the bargain offered by the lords of the manors; for if the Inclosure Act is to be interpreted according to the usual acceptation of the commonest terms, it is not the lord of the manor's signature which will guarantee quiet possession to the purchaser, or save him from ignominious ejectment when the right of the people shall be established.

ADVENTURES IN TEXAS.

CHAPTER IV.—FIRE-HUNTING.

In this paper I shall endeavour to describe fire-hunting, a kind of sport practised, I believe, only in the Southern and Western States, and known only to those who, like myself, have hunted, shot, and fished in the forests and prairies of the Far West. I shall try to recall a camp hunt as it actually occurred on one occasion, the names alone being fictitious. We were sitting one August evening in the eastern verandah of my friend John Sand's house, being the coolest place we could find to smoke our corn shuck cigarettes. John was as good a fellow as ever lived, a South Carolinian by birth, who had, with his two brothers and their wives, migrated to Washington County, Texas, where we were now lazily smoking. They had bought a league of land in one of

the bends of the Rio Brazos de Dios. This land they divided into three portions, and each had built a house and fenced in a field, by the aid of their negroes, of whom they had about a hundred and thirty between them. They produced cotton, Indian corn, sweet potatoes, etc., in large quantities, and were altogether in a very thriving and prosperous condition. My friend John was rather the richest, his *placens uxor* having brought to the establishment some slaves in addition to his own. On this evening he was very silent, and I saw that something had "riled" him; and just as I was about to question him as to the cause, he suddenly broke in with "What do you say to a camp hunt? Colonel Alston's wagons have come back from Houston without bringing either his pickled pork or mine, and that will make us rather short of meat for the niggers, until my teams, which are now on the road to Houston with cotton, return, when they are certain to haul it up. Alston will be safe to go for one; he's a capital hunter, up to all sorts of dodges. We'll take my brother, the doctor; he's not much good to hunt, but he will keep camp, is a first-rate cook, and likes the fun of a camp hunt. We must take a four-mule wagon, a sack or two of salt, some barrels to pack the meat into, and some hands to skin and cure, for I mean meat and business."

"I'm your man," said I; "but don't forget some old 'red eye' whisky in case of snake bites."

"It aint very likely," he rejoined; "so now I'll ride over and see my brother, and you may bet your bottom dollar he'll go at the word; and then I'll ride on to see the Colonel—he'll be about as keen—and arrange where to go and when to start."

On his return he said that both had declared they were "spoiling" for a hunt, and anxious to start the next morning, cross the river Brazos at Milligan's Ferry, and go up into the post oaks, near Boonesville, in Brazos County. The reason we chose this country was, that where the post oaks grow there is rarely any under-growth, and as we intended fire-hunting, this was so much the better for it; and also that Brazos County was very thinly settled, and abounded in game.

The next morning accordingly found us all at Milligan's Ferry, the place agreed upon to meet at. The party consisted of Sand, his brother the doctor, Colonel Alston, Major Carnes, a planter who had heard of our expedition, and had joined us (poor fellow, the yellow fever killed him in 1858, at Galveston, whither he had removed from the healthy interior to the sickly coast), and myself, each of us mounted on our hunting horses, followed by a wagon and four mules, driven by a negro called Big Jake, with his assistants Yellow George and Jim. In the wagon, in addition to the salt and barrels, were our blankets to sleep upon, a keg of tar, and some cotton seed, which, mixed together and made into balls, we intended to burn in our fire-pan to kill the deer with; our cooking utensils, corn meal, coffee, sugar, limes, pepper, etc., and last, but by no means least, a demijohn of Bourbon whisky.

Our road lay due west from the ferry, and was a mere wagon track cut through the forest, for the convenience of the half dozen inhabitants who formed the settlement of Boonesville, and was, for the first half dozen miles, over a dark-red loam, well adapted for plantation purposes, to the growth of sugar, corn, and cotton, but in all this extensive country there were but two plantations. Through this virgin forest, till only within a very few years traversed by none but the savage Camanche, the war-whoop had not been heard for some sixteen years, though the wilderness still often echoed at night the

shrill scream of the great American cat—the panther. The trees grew as they had for ages; the thick dog-wood thickets, as usual in this month, in all their many, tinted variety, the same bushes showing the leaves blood-red, light-yellow, and dark-green, bearing testimony to the intense heat of the summer, and the close approach of the “fall” or autumn. The elm and ash were still of their usual light-green; but interspersed with them, and strongly contrasting, was the beautiful dark, almost black, evergreen of the live oak, and the nearly as dark magnolia. Now and then, too, we came upon large thickets of cedar, and the white as well as the fruit-bearing mulberry; the fruit, however, had long been cleared off by the birds and tree-climbing animals of the forest. Passing sometimes over low flats, we came upon the fan-like leaves of the swamp palmetto; and here, too, was most abundant the climbing rope-like rattan, which, with the mustang grape, festooned the trees and threw their long and graceful arms from the stately hickory to its neighbour the pecan, enabling the ‘possums, ‘coons, and squirrels to pass backwards and forwards, tightrope fashion, and enjoy the nuts of either of these trees, now nearly ripe.

Having gone through this sort of scenery for about six or seven miles, we began to get into a more sandy, and, as it is there called, “rolling,” or hill and dale country. Here the post oaks began to show themselves; they are a kind of red oak, with a very strong family likeness running through them; they have almost invariably a round, mop-like head, do not grow very high, nor very close together, and are almost entirely clear of undergrowth, although one of the most eatable of the wild grapes takes its name from them, and only grows where they do, twining its tendrils amongst their branches. The post oak grape hangs ripe, and of a delicate purple colour, in July. Scattered through these woods, too, are little prairie glades—excellent places for a halt, as you can stake out your horse on a lariat with no fear of his entanglement; and as this rolling region is well watered, almost every valley having its little creek, glistening over its white limestone bed, you obtain the three grand requisites for a camp—wood for a fire, grass for your horse, and water for both of you. After our noon-day halt, Sand and Alston rode on to find a proper place for us to camp at, as well as to kill a deer for supper, before the wagons got up. They succeeded in killing two, and had, when we arrived, some of the choicest pieces roasting on sticks set slanting over the clear red embers of the fire. These sticks are sharpened at each end, the upper and thinnest point being skewered through the meat, and the other stuck in the ground at any angle you please, according to the strength of the fire.

A sportsman from the old country, accustomed to receive a clean gun, with his powder and shot flasks filled, from the hands of a keeper, after a good breakfast; assured, too, that on his return in the evening, no matter what his bag may be, there will be a comfortable dinner for him—when chance or love of sport leads such a one to the backwoods of America, at first, though in the midst of plenty, he will, if quite dependent on himself, be almost starved, from the want of a little knowledge of forest cookery. But let him only hunt a week with some old trapper, or prairie hunter, deep in all forest lore, and he will soon learn, not only how to prepare a meal, but how to choose the wood in the forest, and the “bois de vache” on the prairie, for his fire, and, if of the right sort, will soon become a good hunter, a good cook, and as nearly independent as any one can be; and should he return to civilized life,

will often look back with regret to the wild free life he once led.

The place fixed upon for our encampment was a small prairie, about half a mile long, by perhaps a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards wide, with a creek running at the bottom of it. The horses watered and staked out to graze, we began to see about supper, which consisted of venison steaks, slapjacks, coffee, etc. The ribs were stuck upon stout sticks to roast, as already described, watched by the doctor, to be ready for us when we came in from our fire-hunt, which we expected would be about midnight. The negroes were set to roll up the cotton seed and tar into good sized fire-balls, as the oil contained in the seed, and the tar together, would give a clear, strong, and very bright light.

Fire-hunting is perhaps the most destructive method of killing deer known. It is pursued in the following manner:—An old fryingpan has rivetted on to it four or five upright pieces of hoop iron, whilst a circular piece runs round the top to hold in the fire. The handle of the pan is lashed on to a stout stick, some six or seven feet long, which is carried on the left shoulder, the pan being some three feet behind the head of the hunter. This light meeting the eyes of any animal, is reflected back, or, in hunters’ language, “shines their eyes,” and so amazed or fascinated are the deer by the blaze, that up-wind they are often approached within a few feet. The darker the night, too, for this murdering work (for it is not sport), the better. In our case a supply of food for “the hands” was the justification.

The night having become sufficiently dark, we started, Doctor Sand having charge of the camp. Colonel Alston took the pan, as being the oldest hunter, and most accustomed to the work, the rest of us following to gralloch and hang up on the trees any deer we might be fortunate enough to kill; Yellow George bringing up the rear, with a sack of balls to replenish the pan when necessary. Having got about half a mile from the camp, we turned into the post oaks, facing the wind, that the deer might not smell us; and the first cotton ball being ignited and blazing up brightly, Alston, with the pan on his left shoulder, his left arm over the front part of the handle, and his rifle ready in his right hand, began to look for eyes. We proceeded very slowly, and in perfect silence, the Colonel a few yards in advance, through the forest. Having gone some three or four hundred yards in this manner, the light suddenly stopped, the Colonel’s rifle was slowly raised to his shoulder, and we, peering in the direction it was pointed, perceived five or six pairs of glistening objects, each pair seemingly about four inches apart, and looking like balls of fire. The sharp whip-like crack of the rifle was followed by the sound of a dull fall, and the quick patterning of feet told that one had dropped and the rest had bounded off. The Colonel quietly set the pan down and began carefully to load his rifle; this done—for it is a rule in the backwoods never to move an inch with an empty gun—we all advanced to the spot where the sound of the fall seemed to come from, and found a fine buck, shot through the brain. The deer was speedily gralloched, and thrown up into the fork of a tree, to be recovered and brought into camp in the morning.

This work was continued to nearly midnight, the Colonel sometimes giving up the pan to Sand, and between them they managed to bring to book nine deer, which, with one I killed, made ten. I had my double-barrel shot gun with me, loaded with buck-shot, and, just as Sand was about to shoot at a deer whose eyes he was shining, I caught the loom of another’s body standing

broadside to me, and, firing at the same instant as my friend, had the satisfaction of finding I had brought down a fine buck.

We returned to camp just as the moon, then nearly at her full, was rising, and, having picked some of the ribs we had left roasting, had a pipe, and tumbler of restorative whisky punch brewed by the Doctor, we rolled ourselves in the blankets and were soon fast asleep.

The sun rose gorgeously on the following morning over the tops of the post oaks, and, streaming into the eyes of the tired hunters, soon started them from the blankets which had formed their beds, with saddles for pillows. The negroes, on the contrary, had to be roused, for, sleeping as they invariably do with their heads smothered in the rugs, it would have puzzled the rays of even that splendid sun to have penetrated through the heavy folds of blue coverings. However, they were awakened at last, and sent to bring in the deer, which they were ordered to skin, cut up, and salt the meat down, the bone being all carefully removed. A repetition of supper formed our breakfast, the Doctor cooking it for us as well as getting ready the negroes' food against their return (who fared just as we did), and whilst he was presiding at the fire, the rest of us cleaned and oiled our rifles ready for a stalk. Breakfast over, the hunters of the party, Alston, Sand, Carnes, and myself, shouldered our rifles for a short walk through the forest. As August is a very hot month in Texas, we did not care to fatigue ourselves too much, and therefore separated, each to stalk deer by himself, until, the sun getting high and the heat oppressive, we returned to camp, having killed six deer. We rested as much as possible by day, so as to prepare for a grand fire-hunt at night, as we intended next day, if successful, to return home. We contrived to construct another pan, so that we might divide, and hunt in two parties. Darkness having arrived we started, Carnes and Sand going in one direction, followed by a negro. Alston and myself, taking Big Jake, went in another. Each party hunted till nearly midnight with equal success, Alston and myself killing ten, as on the night before, and Sand and the Major killing seven. There is a sameness in this sport (if it can be called sport), together with almost a certainty of killing a great many deer, which deprives it (except as a matter of business, and to the mere butcher) of much pleasure, and it is scarcely ever resorted to except upon such occasions as led to our expedition—the fact of several mouths depending upon us to fill them. We struck camp next day about noon, having bagged in all thirty-five deer, which was quite enough to fill the conveyance provided for them, and delayed the pace of even that good mule team when they had their heads pointed towards the corn-crib at home. The sandy part of the road proved heavy, and gave rise to much rough language on the part of Big Jake, as he rated his animals as though they understood each word that was said to them. The hunters being mounted on their hunting horses, arrived some time before their spoils, at Colonel Alston's hospitable home, where, after each had taken a warm bath, and had removed, as well as possible, the stains and smell of blood in which they had been steeped, they sat down to the plentiful though homely fare, with hunters' appetites. We had a merry evening of it, and none then thought that it would be the last time we should all meet together, though it was destined so to be. Death, war, and the ocean, separate those once so happy together; only the recollection remains of those days when, high in health and heart, we lived the wild life of the wilderness.

THE PRINTERS' CHAPEL.

The Printers' Chapel is a species of court of judicature of the most democratic kind; seeing that every individual who can be at all influenced by its decisions is a member of the court, and has a voice and a vote. The origin of the term "chapel" is said to have been derived from Caxton's exercising his profession in one of the chapels of Westminster Abbey. However this may have been, it is certain that the chapel has an antiquity almost if not quite equal with that of the printing office; though it is pretty certain that in former times its functions were materially different from what they are now. Originally, there can be little doubt, the chapel determined the prices to be paid for the various kinds of work, and was the source from whence sprang the bye-laws and regulations, which being afterwards embodied in the rules of the printers' union, have for generations governed the policy of the workmen. Most of the prices for work, and the regulations of the trade, have, however, now been so long established, that the chapel never interferes with them in any way, and only refers to them as an authority in support of its own decrees.

In every printing office where men are employed in any number, the chapel may be called into existence at any moment; its office is professedly two-fold—to preserve the property of the employer, and to settle all differences between the men. In its exercise of these functions it levies fines upon the workmen for certain offences, such as throwing about, injuring, or defacing the type, gambling with quadrats in working hours, hindering others in discharge of their work, giving the lie to a comrade, making free with his working implements, circulating evil reports concerning him, striking him in the office, provoking him to strike, etc. etc. The fine which is most rigorously enforced, however, is that for leaving a light burning—such a practice being most dangerous in premises where thousands of loose sheets are always hanging to dry. Whenever a workman finds that another has gone out of the room and left his candle burning, he immediately blows it out, claps on a paper extinguisher, and delivers it to the "father of the chapel," who keeps it until the delinquent appears to claim it, when he must pay the fine or have it booked against him. If it be a gas-light, the fact of its being left burning is reported to the father. A workman, however, who is leaving the room for a short time only, may suffer his light to burn on, on the condition that he gives it in charge to his next neighbour, who is bound to take the charge thus laid on him, and is just as responsible as if the light were his own. The fine for this offence is, for a workman, sixpence; but if an employer leaves his light burning, the chapel will mulct him in half-a-crown.

The father of the chapel, above mentioned, is generally the oldest of the workmen: in all the councils he acts as the president and chairman; he collects the votes of the members, sums up the evidence in cases of accusation, and pronounces the verdict, from which there is no appeal—the laws of the chapel being as despotic as those of the Medes and Persians. It is always in the power of any workman to arraign another workman at the bar of the chapel, if he chooses; but if this is a privilege, it is one not very grossly abused, and that for the obvious reason, that if the accuser of any man fails to substantiate in the fullest manner the charge he brings, he is himself accounted a criminal, and dealt with accordingly.

When a man has resolved to bring a comrade to the judgment of this tribunal, he first gives him notice of

his intention to "chapel" him, and, this intimation failing to produce an accommodation, the accuser states his case to the father, and desires that a chapel may be called. The father is rarely in a hurry to do this, and will settle the matter summarily if he can, especially if he considers the affair a trifling one; but it is out of his power to suppress it entirely, if the complainant persists in his demand, since the latter can, by depositing the price of a gallon of beer, compel the calling of the chapel in spite of the father. The chapel to be summoned may be either a "general chapel," to consider of matters interesting the whole house, or a "special chapel," the interest of which is confined to a single room or companionship. It is summoned by the clerk of the chapel, who runs round to the members and informs them of the precise moment of assembling; and the attendance is sure to be general and punctual, since any neglect in this respect would constitute a chapelable offence in itself. Proceedings are inaugurated by ordering in a sufficient amount of beer to supply everybody with a libation, and which is paid for out of the chapel funds accumulated from fines. The meeting is held round the "imposing-stone," which is that large table in the centre of the room on which the correcting is done; and the members, who together constitute the jury, stand, sit, or lounge around in their shirt-sleeves and aprons. The father, invoking silence with three blows of a mallet, states the case briefly, and calls on the plaintiff to set forth his grievance. The plaintiff then steps forward, and addressing himself to "Mister Father and Gentlemen," commences his oration. This he almost invariably does with an assumption of grave dignity, and is seen to approach the subject by a route so perplexingly circuitous as to puzzle any one to tell whither he is driving. His experience in putting paragraphs into type has furnished him with no end of words, and of these he is sure to pick out the longest and least intelligible to garnish his discourse. By and by, as nobody interrupts him, he gets to the end of his grievance, and the defendant is allowed to reply, which he does very much in the same strain, and with the same solemn deference to "Mister Father and Gentlemen." There is in fact so much grandiloquence and stupid solemnity in these first stages of the affair, that a stranger would be apt to burst into a laugh, mistaking the whole for a burlesque. The parties to the contest are, however, perfectly serious and in earnest, and it is not until the observations of the volunteer council on either side are heard that the jocular element begins to show itself.

After the complaint and rejoinder, anybody who can succeed in catching the eye of Mister Father is allowed to make what remarks he chooses. If the affair is generally interesting, those remarks are usually sound, practical, and to the purpose, though they are almost sure to be disfigured by the same grandiloquence of style; but if the complaint is merely a personal one, and is at all capable of being turned into a joke, it is sure to undergo that transformation at the hands of the chapel members. If the grievance wears a frivolous aspect, the complainant will get peppered with a series of witticisms of a kind which cannot be quoted here, and which, making up in raciness for what they lack in novelty, will rattle about his ears from all sides. On such occasions the chapel is apt to grow noisy, and the libations more liberal than they should be; but in the end a rude kind of justice will be done, though little allowance is likely to be made for anything like thin-skinned sensitiveness or self-esteem on the part of a suitor.

The verdict of the chapel is declared in one of three ways, according to circumstances: In trifling matters it

is pronounced by the father upon a show of hands; in matters of more consequence it is put to the vote; and affairs of more moment still, and particularly such as affect character, are decided by what is termed "chalking." When this last method is had recourse to, a board is taken to some far corner, out of sight, and is divided by a chalked line into two columns, one headed *For*, the other *Against*. The members go one at a time to the place, and record their votes by drawing a line with the chalk under one or other of the words; and in order that no man may know how his predecessor voted, it is usual for the first two to score on opposite sides. When all the members have thus voted, the board is brought to the father, who sums up the several totals; if they are even, he himself gives the casting vote, which in that case is almost sure to be on the lenient side, and pronounces the judgment of the chapel.

The sentence on the convicted person is almost invariably a fine, but on rare occasions there is, or there was, an exception to this rule; for in years long past we have seen men undergo a species of corporal punishment, anything but trifling, at the hands of the chapel, although it was never inflicted until it had been earned by the grossest misconduct. The punishment was a species of bastinado—not applied to the feet—and inflicted on the culprit as he lay with his face to the imposing-stone, to which he was held fast by the hands of his indignant comrades. Of late years, we believe, there have been no instances of this kind, the modern tendencies of the chapel being towards mercy—not to mention beer.

Whatever the decree of the chapel, it must be acquiesced in: there is no appeal against its judgment, and woe be to any workman who should dare to refuse submission to its authority. It will be in vain for him to attempt to carry on his labours against the united opposition of all the other members. He will find a number of invisible enemies secretly thwarting his purposes; the types in his cases will become unaccountably mixed, so that he cannot make use of them; all the work he has done in the day will be undone in the night; the implements of his trade will be missing, or will be rendered useless; meanwhile, not a man will speak to him, or even recognise his presence in the room; he is "sent to Coventry," and inquirers after him would be directed to seek him there. All this will continue so long as he is refractory, or until he quits the office; if, on the other hand, he chooses to retract his opposition and submit, he has but to do so, and his offence is forgiven at once, and the mischief done to him secretly is openly repaired.

Many employers have from time to time been loud in their complaints on the subject of the chapel; and in truth there is ample ground for objecting to its arbitrary assertion of itself in times of pressure. Imagine the consternation of an employer, who, being pledged to the execution of certain work within a definite period, comes into the office at noon, and finds everything at a stand-still, and all the men crowded into an upper room, where they continue speechifying and swallowing huge cans of beer hour after hour. He has not the remotest idea when the conclave will dissolve, or how many of the men, after it is dissolved, will be inclined to return to their work, or, being so inclined, will be in a condition to do any good; experience having taught him that when the chapel endures for many hours, a certain proportion of the members, who are of the class addicted to "wet the other eye," will be likely to finish the day at the public-house. Thus the grand objection to the chapel—though we are bound to say that it is an objection which has

much less foundation than it used to have—is the indirect encouragement it affords to drinking habits.

On the other hand, the advantages of the chapel are evident and manifold. As no one ever dreams of questioning its decisions, it is the workman's *ultima ratio*, to which he can have recourse in cases of difference and dispute that can be settled by no other means. In the details of the printing business, in which novelties are being constantly introduced, questions are liable to arise at any time as to rates of payment: the chapel will settle such questions, either by its own dictum, or by means of a deputation whom they will empower to treat with the employer. Again, the chapel is a protection to the unfriended workman, who can always command its assistance, and it is therefore a terror to the rowdies, and operates most effectually in keeping the peace in the office. In nothing is it more despotic than in the summary suppression of anything like a serious quarrel; while the men rather delight in a mock row, and will sometimes raise a "jerry" that shall make the whole building ring again, to mark their sense of a comrade's blundering, or of his boasting, they will tolerate no violence or exhibition of malice; in fact, their own interests are concerned in keeping down actual outrage, since a fight in a composing-room would be hardly less disastrous than the intrusion of "a bull in a china-shop." A fighter is sure to be chapelled and fined, and the most pugnacious spirit is not long proof against a species of correction that touches his pocket.

It is a question whether employers, taken in the mass, would elect to abolish the printers' chapel, even if it were left to their option to do so. Many of them, doubtless, would like to modify this ancient institution, and to place its action under some control, so as, while retaining its efficiency as a preservative of property, and a maintainer of order and peace, to get rid of the loss of time which it is apt to occasion. Already this is done to a considerable extent in the larger London offices. Where a hundred or more men are all working together, it will not do to lose fifteen or twenty pounds by standing still for half-a-day for the sake of settling some trifling claim or trumpery dispute. This consideration has latterly had more weight than it used to have, and fathers of chapels are seen to adjourn their conclaves when they do not come to a speedy decision, or to defer summoning them together until the business of the day is ended.

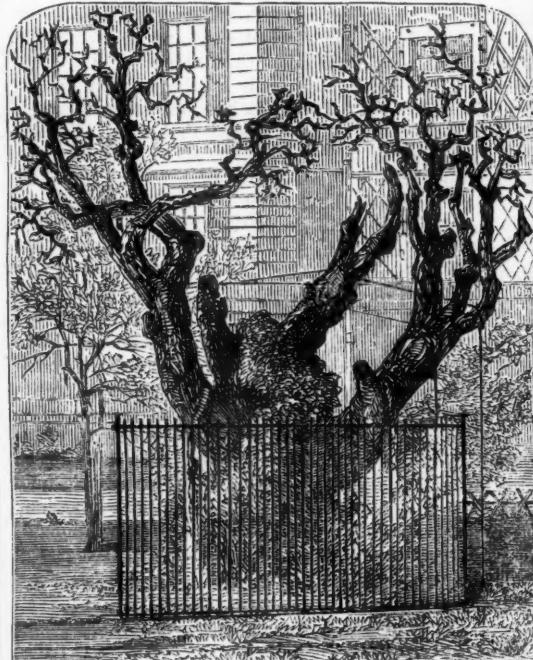
CITY TREES.

THERE are a greater number of green spots within the boundaries of the City than is supposed even by many who have spent a long life amid the turmoil and bustle of this great metropolis. Some of these are situated in curious out-of-the-way nooks, and consist of inclosures of parish burial grounds, now disused, but which, in most instances, are neatly and carefully kept; in some, are flowers and shrubs which in the spring time pleasantly show forth the fresh buds, which contrast cheerfully with the dark, smoky brick-work. In little squares, and in other nooks, there are trees, some of them of considerable size, which were probably planted soon after the great fire of 1666. In Cheapside, close to where the ancient cross formerly stood, is a very fine group of trees, on which, not long since, two or three pairs of rooks built their nests. In Printing House Square, close to the "Times" office, there are some large trees, the

branches of which are gnarled and grim; but in the season their green leaves are refreshing to the eye. In Watling Street, St. Paul's Churchyard, and in St. Bride's Churchyard, in spite of the smoke and impure atmosphere, the trees continue to flourish.

Some years since, Leigh Hunt stated that the wayfarer could not walk along a single street in the City, without in some part of it seeing a tree; and although since that time many of them have perished, it is yet surprising how generally this remark still applies.

Within the walls of the Charterhouse, there are extensive grounds and several trees; and we trust that ere long an attempt will be made to plant some on the site of Smithfield, especially where so many martyrs suffered. The most important and easily accessible piece of City greenery is the Temple Gardens—that ancient spot, which is much associated with a particular phase of the history of London. In the Inner Temple Garden stands the venerable and weather-beaten tree shown in the engraving. It is a sycamore tree; the trunk which remains is of large girth, but most of the branches have been blown down by various storms, and now they are propped by crutches, and in other ways carefully preserved.



OLD SYCAMORE TREE IN THE TEMPLE GARDENS.

In an old view of this garden, dated about two hundred and fifty years since, a row of trees is shown following in a line, to the westward of that which now remains; and not long since, Mr. Broome, the gardener of the Inner Temple, making excavations for some draining purposes, discovered the stumps of several of those trees, which have been supposed by some to have been standing in Shakespere's days; but however this may be, under the shade of those now withered boughs, Dr. Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith have walked and talked. This solitary survivor, independent of other associations, is undoubtedly the oldest tree in London City. We hope that it may be long preserved.